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ABSTRACT

Highlighting the impact of family and community involvement on student achievement, this videotape presents a satellite town meeting hosted by Secretary of Education, Richard Riley. The 60-minute video first notes the consensus in support of education, specifically higher standards, reasonable assessment, well-trained teachers, parent involvement, and a quality educational environment. The guest panelists then respond to a moderator's questions. In addition to Secretary Riley, guests on the panel are: a counselor to Secretary Riley; a representative of the Education Foundation; superintendent of public schools for Newport News, Virginia; executive director of the Frankfort Group Ministry; and the Chattanooga, Tennessee school district parent involvement coordinator, all of whom were also involved in an educational partnership. Questions the guests respond to include: (1) how community involvement improves education; (2) how community-based organizations work with parents; (3) how community-based organizations help school districts work together; (4) how student achievement is affected when community partnerships come into the schools; and (5) how faith communities can be involved. The video then features partnerships at work at an elementary school and at a high school in the Newport News district which were designated Blue Ribbon schools by the Department of Education. The Dept. of Education's Partnerships for Family Involvement in Education is then detailed. Questions from the town meeting audience include: (1) What are benefits of involvement for businesses? (2) How is a partnership managed/scheduled? (3) What roles do faith communities play? (4) What strategies involve parents historically unable to participate? and (5) How has the Partnerships for Family Involvement initiative helped local partnerships? Reiterating that all partnerships are to serve the students and that students should be included in finding solutions, the video concludes with steps for an effective partnership: (1) establish a clear vision; (2) focus on student achievement and school improvement; (3) connect partnerships with the schools; (4) increase family involvement; and (5) make a long-term commitment. (HTH)

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